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http://www.kokomotribune.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-don-t-view-the-videos/article_d0752bbe-4cbf-11e5-b3b4-a73e4730d72c.html



Courtesy of WDBJ-TV via AP

ALISON PARKER AND ADAM WARD: This undated photograph made available by WDBJ-TV shows reporter Alison Parker, left, and cameraman Adam Ward. Parker and Ward were fatally shot during an on-air interview Wednesday, Aug. 26, 2015, in Moneta, Virginia. Authorities identified the suspect as fellow journalist Vester Lee Flanagan II, who appeared on WDBJ-TV as Bryce Williams. Flanagan was fired from the station in 2013.

Editorial: Don't view the videos

When Vester Lee Flanagan II began what would be his last day Wednesday, there was nothing left to chance.

Flanagan, who went by the professional name “Bryce Williams,” had reserved a rental car at a nearby airport before heading out. He made his way to Smith Mountain Lake in Moneta, Virginia, where Vicki Gardner, of the Moneta Chamber of Commerce, was being interviewed by WDBJ-TV reporter Alison Parker, with Adam Ward operating the camera.

While doing some videography of his own, Flanagan raised a handgun for several seconds and waited until he was sure he was in the frame before unloading on the three on live television.

He later shot himself after a short manhunt and died of his injuries within the space of a few hours. Ward and Parker died on the scene, while Gardner was admitted to the hospital and is expected to survive.

Flanagan was a former employee of the station and had been let go in 2013.

Before his social media accounts were suspended, Flanagan posted his videos of the attacks to Facebook and live-tweeted about his deeds on Twitter. News organizations around the globe were instantly

presented with a dilemma: to show the videos, or not. Surely, the intrinsic news value was evident, for it was the top story everywhere.

But at what point does the media go from reporting the news to carrying water for those who seek to inspire terror? WDBJ-TV opted not to replay the videos. Similarly, our parent company, Community Newspaper Holdings Inc., made a company-wide decision to abstain, as did countless others.

As a trained journalist, Flanagan knew how to boost the signal of his acts in front of the largest audience for the greatest effect. As journalists, we either do his bidding, or we act like the gatekeepers we're meant to be. No one kills journalists on camera without trying to make a point. We can't allow him to have that unearned forum.

Let us pause here and recognize the brave efforts of Parker, Ward and the entire WDBJ-TV news team. Even in his last moments, Ward's camera managed to capture a parting image of his murderer. This screen grab was crucial to law enforcement, which used it to identify Flanagan.

In the following hours, the WDBJ journalists who kept reporting through their tears and grief earned our respect. That's how you

honor these journalists, by doing your job the way it's meant to be done. Even under the worst circumstances.